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ONLINE EDUCATION ARTICLES

In The Recession, Is Your Adult Education Class In Trouble?

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 By Jennifer Williamson, Distance-Education.org Columnist

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Many school districts that deliver adult education classes are severely cutting back on their programs—while others are cutting entire programs that support thousands of adult students.

And it's coming at the worst possible time. With unemployment up in forty-three states since December of 2010, many employees are out of work—and looking for job training programs to help them get a new job. Here are a few areas where adult education programs are in trouble.

California

California has cut thousands of [adult education classes](#) in many regions, including Sacramento. ESL, GED and ABE classes are getting cut across the board, as well as specific high school subjects for adults—with funding and services reduced by as much as half in some areas.

New Jersey

In New Jersey, approximately 35 high school programs serve over 8,000 adult students. Almost all of their budget will be cut this year if the new funding proposal is approved. The programs are currently free and offered to all New Jersey residents—even those without legal immigration status. The programs can provide a lifeline for adults who need job training or a high school degree.

New York

In New York, [adult literacy education programs](#) will take a hit of about \$2.6 million if proposed budget cuts go through. GED testing sites would lose over \$1 million as well. The programs serve approximately 1.6 million people in New York City alone without a high school degree.

Louisiana

There will be over \$16 million in budget cuts for education statewide in Louisiana, according to the state department of education. This includes pre-kindergarten programs, reading and math for [elementary and secondary schools](#), and adult education. Adult education is slated to take the biggest cut, of approximately \$3.2 million.

The United Kingdom

[The recession](#) hasn't just affected the United States. In England, many colleges are facing budget cuts for adult education programs. In England, the Association of Colleges says that average budget cuts for adult education program



Overall, the situation in the US looks bleak. Tax revenue is declining as a result of the recession, and most states have had to make tough decisions when it comes to spending cuts as a result.

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In The Recession, Is Your Adult Education...

funding will be cut an average of 16%--and could range up to 25%. The cuts will apply to all programs for students aged 19 and older.

Overall, the situation in the US looks bleak. [Tax revenue is declining](#) as a result of the recession, and most states have had to make tough decisions when it comes to spending cuts as a result. The problem is that these cuts often affect the most at-risk individuals and families the most—which increases the economic problems in these states.

Major funding cuts to public service programs have been happening since 2008—and the cuts affect a wide swath of programs including elderly and disabled services, health care, and public and higher education. Of course, the need for these services has only increased, since more people are out of work, facing foreclosure and dealing with [serious financial losses](#). In many states, budget cuts in 2011 are looking to be even more drastic.

Many states work to increase their funds by increasing taxes. Of course, this causes its own problems. Income taxes put an added burden on families, and high business taxes can cause some [businesses](#) to relocate—taking their jobs with them. Taxes on higher-earning households can sometimes cause affected families to save more—and spending is what's needed to get many states out of economic trouble.

If education funding is being threatened in your state, your first step should be to research how severe the problem is, and whether the budget has already passed in state and local governments. If there is still a chance funding cuts might not pass, write to your legislature and newspaper editorials supporting the programs. There may be community groups working to bring public attention to the budget cuts, and you may be able to help them as well. If the government knows adult education is important to its constituents, leaders may be willing to preserve it in your area.

Sources:

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About the Author



Jennifer Williamson worked as a GED teacher for an adult education nonprofit for two years. Her students came from all walks of life, and ranged in age from sixteen to sixty-eight. During that time, she became knowledgeable about the unique needs of non-traditional and adult learners. She counseled hundreds of students about their higher education options, including online degree programs. Today, she works as an education writer in Pennsylvania.

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